

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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R 091050 Z MAR 73

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9478

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITHIN NEW UNITED OPPOSITION FRONT

1. ON MARCH 6, VICE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE (UNITED) ZAHID SARFARAZ TOLD LAHORE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT COUNCIL MUSLIM LEAGUE (CML) WOULD BOYCOTT UNITED FRONT FORMED BY OPPOSITION PARTIES, INCLUDING UNITED PML, IN ISLAMABAD MARCH 1. HE ANNOUNCED CONVENTION OF ALL MUSLIM LEAGUE WORKERS WOULD BE HELD IN LAHORE MARCH 11 TO MAKE FORMAL DECLARATION OF LEAGUE' S REJECTION OF FRONT AND 12 POINTS ADOPTED BY IT, AND TO PURGE LEADERS WHO CONTINUED TO ACT AGAINST PARTY' S INTERESTS. AS REASONS FOR HIS REJECTION, SARFARAZ CLAIMED FRONT FORMED AS NAP VEHICLE, POINTED TO NAP POLICY IN FAVOR RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH, FOUR NATIONALITIES CONCEPT OF NAP, HISTORIC OPPOSITION TO CREATION OF PAKISTAN BY JAMAAT- E- ISLAMI, FAILURE OF EARLIER OPPOSITION UNITED FRONTS, AND OTHER BASIC IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LEAGUE AND VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF OPPOSITION.

2. IN INTERNAL LEAGUE CHARGES AND COUNTER CHARGES WHICH FOLLOWED SARFARAZ' S STATEMENT, UNITED LEAGUE PRESIDENT HASAN SHEIKH SERVED NOTICE REQUIRING SARFARAZ TO JUSTIFY HIS ACTIONS AGAINST PARTY DISCIPLINE, AND 8 LEAGUE LEADERS ISSUED EGATEMENT CLAIMING SARFARAZ HAD AGREED TO FRONT PARTICIPATION. IN REPLY,
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SARFARAZ DENIED ANY AGREEMENT WITH FRONT, CHARGED SHEIKH WITH ATTENDING OPPOSITION MEETINGS WITHOUT PERMISSION OF PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CC), AND CLAIMED HASTILY CALLED MARCH 1 MEETING WHICH APPROVED PARTICIPATION WAS ATTENDED BY ONLY 18 OF 56 MEMBERS.

3. ABDUL WAHID KHAN, VP FOR PUNJAB OF QAIYUM MUSLIM LEAGUE, TOLD CG MARNRXEI THAT SARFARAZ' S CHARGES ESSENTIALLY CORRECT IN THAT PARTY LEADERS SHOULD NOT HAVE MADE BASIC DECISION SUCH AS PARTICIPATION IN FRONT WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL OF FULL PARTY CC. WAHID, HOWEVER, BELIEVED LEADERSHIP WOULD GO THROUGH MOTIONS OF CONSULTATION WITH PARTY AND DISPUTE WOULD SIMMER DOWN.

4. COMMENT: WAHID MAY BE RIGHT IN HIS BELIEF THAT SARFARAZ' S OBJECTIONS WILL BE OVERCOME WITHOUT LASTING DAMAGE. HOWEVER, THE CML ITSELF HAS LITTLE ENOUGH STRENGTH WITH SHAUKAT HAYAT' S POSITION IN QUESTION, DAULTANA SERVING AS AMBASSADOR TO UK AND REPORTEDLY NOW SUPPORTING GOVT ON DRAFT CONSTITUTION, AND GENERAL WEAKNESS OF PARTY ORGANIZATION. THUS, WASHING OF DIRTY LINEN IN PUBLIC REVEALS INTERNECAKE STRUGGLE AND CANNOT HELP UNITED LEAGUE OR UNITED FRONT. MOREOVER, MANY RANK AND FILERS THROUGHOUT OPPOSITION RANKS WILL AGREE WITH SOME OF SARFARAZ' S IDEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS.

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